

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

If you saw four miracles in the next 10 minutes during my preaching, would you ever again doubt that God the Father is all powerful or that Jesus is Lord or that Jesus as the Son of Man is also all powerful?

Four miracles? If leaks in our roofs disappeared; if we were stampeded with young, new members; if our shut-ins were cured of their aches and ailments so as to be here every Sunday; if our ten Missouri Synod colleges had their debts cancelled in the next ten minutes---would you ever again worry about your life, would you ever again murmur under your breath about your church or her pastors, would you ever again speak badly about the person behind you in the pew? Sadly, yes, yes you would. You are still in your sins. You and I are like the Apostles in the boat. Our faith is always affected by our circumstances, by our emotions, by local and world news and especially by Satan. We can become so weak of faith that we question if God can save us from some calamity; if there even is a Holy God; if there is forgiveness for my sin; if there is life after death.

Thanks be to God, there is a miracle that is the cure for sin, for every-day transgressions. It is not the miracle of walking on water nor the miracle of instantaneous roof repair. It is the miracle of our Lord Jesus' resurrection. If the miracle of Jesus' resurrection did not happen, then you and I are still in our sins. If the miracle of the bodily resurrection of Jesus did not happen, then my preaching is useless and your faith is worthless. Only the miracle of Jesus' resurrection paves the way for the final miracle on the Last Day: empty tombs at all cemeteries.

We just heard twelve verses of Gospel text of Matthew. In those 12 verses we heard four miracles. 1-Jesus walking on the sea; 2-Peter walking on the sea; 3-Jesus plucking out and holding up a drowning Peter from the sea water; and 4-the wind becoming calm on the Sea of Galilee.

St. Mark and St. John also write about these miracles of Jesus on the Sea of Galilee. Mark omits the part about Peter, and John adds a fifth miracle

after Jesus and Peter board the boat in the middle of the Sea: immediately the boat was at the shore where they were headed! Their rowing ceased. Swoosh. This wooden boat moved faster than a hydroplane!

That's a whole lot of miracles in such a short text. Why? Because those 12 guys in the boat were still not connecting "Jesus" with "Lord." Would these 12 men, bellies full from a big 'miracle' supper of fish and bread, setting out on a casual, evening row across the northern part of the Sea of Galilee, have given satisfactory answers to the questions of our Old Testament reading in Job?:

- Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?
- Who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together?
- Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?
- Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place?
- Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
- Have the gates of death been revealed to you?

Would these 12 men have known that the rebuke of Job by the Lord from a whirlwind (Job 38:1) was Job being rebuked by his Redeemer, by his Redeemer who would eventually take the name Jesus? Remember, sinful Job was also righteous Job. Remember, sinful Job, the one who was asked the questions we heard in the first reading because he needed rebuke and correction, he was the same Job who confessed with his lips the belief of his heart: I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES AND HE SHALL STAND AT LAST ON THE EARTH AND AFTER MY SKIN IS DESTROYED, THIS I KNOW, THAT IN MY FLESH I SHALL SEE GOD.

Yes, the disciples confess with their lips, "Truly you are the Son of God," but only after the rebuke of Redeemer Jesus, "O you of little faith." And that wasn't the only rebuke for their sin after seeing five miracles in less than 10 minutes. The Holy Spirit caused Mark to make

this comment (6:51) when Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat: *They [the apostles] were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts **were hardened.***

If needed, Jesus can miraculously supply loaves of bread to large groups of hungry people. If needed, Jesus can walk on water. If needed, Jesus can cause other people to walk on water. If needed, Jesus can pluck the drowning from raging seas. If needed, Jesus can calm storms. If needed, Jesus can move people and objects from one place to another place in the blink of an eye. If needed. If miracles be God's will.

Miracles did not always serve God's will.

- There were times during the ministry of Jesus that He could do no mighty works or few miracles (Mark 6:5), because of the unbelief that surrounded Him.
- There were times that Jesus waited to do miracles. Friend Lazarus was dead four days before Jesus resurrected him.
- There were other times when Jesus cured on the spot. Ten lepers. The woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years.
- There were other times when Jesus did nothing, as in the case of a beheaded John the Baptist. John will not be resurrected until the Last Day. And John will NOT be headless!

Miracles are not magic, though they can defy the laws of nature and gravity. Miracles are unusual acts, extraordinary manifestations in a natural world. You and I believe in miracles. We believe in the supernatural. We cannot have faith without believing in miracles. If we did not believe in miracles we would have to throw out the flood of Noah and the 10 plagues called down on Egypt; the life-saving serpent on a pole and the ground opening up to swallow the evil family of Korah; the meat and bread consumed by fire from the tip of Gideon's staff and the three-day experience of Jonah inside the belly of the great fish. If we did not believe in the supernatural, we could not believe that Mary became pregnant without male sperm or that a special star guided

wise men to Bethlehem or that Jesus survived 40 days in the wilderness without food or even that Jesus rose from the dead after three days of lifelessness.

Christianity is not just about morals, it is also about miracles. If you don't want to believe in the miracles of Scripture, you will never come to faith, for the resurrection of Jesus is the miracle that makes your faith possible.

- It is what saves you.
- It is what drives away fear as you watch your beloved spouse take that last breath.
- It is what comforts you when your son or daughter is suddenly taken from this world by a drunk driver or by a bullet or by an undetectable virus.
- It is what calms the storm of the terrors over daily sins like irritating your wife or laughing at a friend or wishing evil on your enemy.

Jesus died for my sin. God the Father was pleased with His Son's work on my behalf. Jesus was raised from the dead for my justification.

The Redeemer who was present at the laying of the foundation of the earth, the Redeemer who gave boundaries to the seas, the Redeemer who told the morning sun when to shine, **is** the Redeemer who told the 12 men in the boat not to fear. He said to them as He walked on the rough, raging water, "I am." These two words clearly identify Jesus with God, as God, is God. I am. Yahweh. Jehovah we say in English. "I am who I am" said the LORD to Moses. "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" said Yahweh as Moses hid his face. I am. It means unique. None other. One of a kind. Yahweh. A personal name, but a popular one. I am, the most common name for God in the Bible. And here on the rough seas, Jesus says, "I am. Have no fear." He's identifying Himself as the same God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush. It's doubtful that the 12 understood that on that stormy, early morning. They didn't understand the miracle of the five loaves and two fish the day previous. But when

sunlight came that morning, as their boat suddenly ‘arrived’ in Capernaum, they would hear more. They would hear Jesus teaching and beginning sentences with the words, “I am.”

I am the living bread.

I am the bread come down from heaven.

I am the bread of life.

To the Jewish ear, it was known what Jesus was saying. I, Jesus, was with Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I, Jesus, am God.

And what happened? Was Jesus believed? Not by many. These “I am” statements caused many of His hearers to leave Him. Maybe these deserters needed more miracles—more food for their bellies, more sandals for their kids’ feet, more cures for their sick. No. They needed more shame, more humility, more repentance. As do we whenever we approach our Lord.

In a few minutes you will approach your Lord. Five miracles will be before you. Bread will be the Body of Jesus. Wine will be the Blood of Jesus. You and I will eat and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus. We will be given forgiveness for our sins. Finally, our hearts will believe all of this. Five miracles that happen on a weekly basis that bring Christ to you.....in your mouth and in your heart. Five miracles whereby you taste and see that the Lord is good. Five miracles that save you.

How can this be? Do not doubt. Do not be of little faith. God works. Jesus works. Just like He worked in walking on water and having Peter walk on water. Jesus works calming storms and harboring boats. Jesus works laying foundations and telling oceans their boundaries and commanding when the morning light is to appear. Jesus works revealing the gates of death and the way of eternal life.

Jesus still works. Miraculously.

In the name of the Father + Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.